



TREE WELL ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

PLANT INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

INSTALLATION GUIDELINES

- **Planting depth:** The top of any newly installed plant should be just above the soil line. This way, mulching around the plant does not bury the new plant leaving it to properly drain away excess water.
- **Tree Root Zone:** To minimize the impact on tree roots, no land should be disturbed in the area 18 inches from a tree trunk. This area constitutes the critical root zone of trees.
- **Fertilizer:** An 18-24-12 fertilizer is recommended for plant establishment. Add this fertilizer to the soil surface after planting.

MULCHING GUIDELINES

Beyond providing an aesthetic value, mulch greatly aids in the retention of soil moisture while keeping the soil cool.

- Shredded hardwood mulch is the preferred type of mulch for urban tree wells. Pine mulches are not recommended due to their rapid decomposition rate and high susceptibility to wind movement.
- Mulch should never be deeper than 3-4 inches. Once the depth exceeds this range then moisture cannot escape from the soil leading to low soil oxygen and conditions that favor fungal development over root growth. Tree roots will be forced to grow upward into the mulch seeking a more favorable moisture/oxygen environment. This condition is called "crown rooting" and can lead to root death.
- Mulch should never be allowed to pile against the tree trunk. If so, the mulch will trap moisture against the wood of the trunk causing physiological problems as well as promoting fungal activity that can lead to disease.
- Gravel is not advised. Since tree wells are located directly adjacent to streets, rocks will eventually spill onto the roadway and create a hazard for cyclists and drivers.

WATERING GUIDELINES

- To water, moisten the soil 6 to 8 inches deep. As a guide, 1 inch of water wets the soil to a depth of 6 inches. A small shovel may be used as a probe to determine how much water is saturating the ground.
- Consider installing a cistern to collect rainwater for a more sustainable way to water your tree wells.
- The plants listed on the Approved Plant List were selected based on their ability to withstand periods of drought; however, regular watering during the first year after planting is critical to plant growth and survival. In subsequent years, watering can be reduced according to the needs of each particular plant.